DRIVE Electric USA Program Success Stories from Priority Area 3:

Engage Electric Utilities & Regulators To Advance EV Acquisitions

Six stories included (in order):
2. Electrify Kansas – “Drive Electric Kansas Success Story - Utilities”
3. Electrify Missouri – “Empowering Leadership for an Electrified Clayton”
Priority Area #3 – Utility and Regulator Education
When – April 16, 2022
Where – Denver, CO

Denver Auto Show with Xcel Energy

Major Partners: Xcel Energy

Purpose: Drive Electric Colorado ran the EV ride and drive with Xcel Energy at the 2023 Denver Auto Show.

Narrative: Each year, Colorado continues to see an increase in EV curiosity and awareness. Since the 2022 Denver Auto Show was canceled, the 2023 Denver Auto Show was a comeback event and the first ever show to have a large spotlight on EVs.

The Denver Auto Show was sponsored by Xcel Energy, the state’s largest utility, and one of Drive Electric Colorado’s largest and closest sponsors. Due to our relationship with Xcel Energy, we were tasked with hosting and running the Xcel Energy EV experience and ride and drive to amplify EV education, spread the word about Xcel Energy’s EV incentives, and get as many people behind the wheel as possible.

The Denver Auto Show ran from April 12-16, 2022, with the ride and drive occurring every day. There were 9 vehicles in the line up, sourced from local Colorado dealerships or part of Xcel Energy’s dealership network. The Drive Electric Colorado team led the ride and drive logistics and planning process by implementing a new software to register drivers online, gather license information, and contact information for follow ups. We met with Xcel Energy bi-weekly for three months before the auto show to plan, and organized different roles such as volunteer participation, professional driver training, logistics with the venue, and more. Xcel Energy funded this show and our staff’s time, as well as connected us to the Colorado Forum, which provided additional funding.

We also took pre and post test drive surveys from each participant to gauge their EV knowledge, awareness or lack thereof regarding Xcel Energy’s incentives, and interest in EVs, including future adoption. This data was sent to Xcel Energy and the Colorado Forum.

Outputs & Outcomes:

Denver Auto Show results - we conducted 1,160 total ride and drives where 44% of participants drove an EV for the first time. This was a big jump from the 2021 Denver Auto Show with Xcel Energy where over half of participants were experiencing an EV for the first time.

This partnership with Xcel Energy was a great success and a win on both sides. Coloradans were able to experience EVs, get questions answered by EV experts, learn more about incentives from the state, federal, and utility level, and gain insight into Drive Electric Colorado as a future resource for anything
EV-related. Drive Electric Colorado was seen as the face of EV education on behalf of Xcel Energy. We answered EV questions, organized the ride and drive, and gathered data on home and workplace charging needs.

This event is just one of our many events in cooperation with Xcel Energy. Drive Electric Colorado is grateful to Xcel Energy for this opportunity and looks forward to continuing our work together.

**Best Practices & Lessons Learned:**

A) Start planning for a large scale event like this as soon as possible. Invite volunteers, EV clubs, and other stakeholders to help your staff plan and run this event. Leverage connections!

B) Look into funding opportunities to assist your team with compensating staff and volunteer time, buying lunches, paying for parking, software & tech needs, and other collateral.

C) Find an online software to run the ride and drive component. We used Rentrax. It speeds up the process a lot and eliminates the use of pen and paper forms which can be slow, unorganized, and wasteful.

D) Have backup options for those who are not as tech savvy – keep some physical forms on hand for ride and drive sign ups, have translation available, or have staff available to walk individuals through the process.

E) Ensure you have proper signage for the ride and drive sign up and launch locations.

F) Determine your ride and drive route with consideration for timing, construction, or traffic. Ensure the drivers in the cars have proper safety training, can answer EV questions, and are familiar with the route beforehand.

![Part of the EV lineup](image)
Drive Electric Colorado staff with two of our Volunteer EV Coaches at our booth on the show floor
A happy EV test driver at the Denver Auto Show
Priority Area #3 - Utility and Regulator Engagement
When - August 2023
Where - Kansas City

Electrify Kansas Success Story - Utilities

Major Partners: Evergy, Electric League of Missouri, Electric League of Kansas

Purpose: To inform and educate fleet and utility regulators.

Narrative: The Kansas City Regional Clean Cities Coalition, which operates Electrify Kansas and is part of the Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC), partnered with Evergy (the largest electric utility in Kansas that also serves into Missouri) to host a commercial ride and drive event. The event was part of the Energy Forum, a local conference directed towards fleet personnel, sustainability managers, developers, utilities, and other staff interested in learning more about what is going on with fleet electrification. On top of all the educational sessions, all attendees were able to participate in the Ride and Drive. We brought a few companies who showcased large Class 7 and Class 8 EVs such as a Nikola Semi and XOS stepvan to the event. Light Duty vehicles like the Ford F-150 Lightning and the Volkswagen ID.4 were also in attendance, with a Polestar 2 on display. The intention was to excite fleets about electrification and garner quality discussions.

The Energy Forum event was put together by the Electric League of Missouri and Kansas, a collective focused on pushing the statewide goals of electrification and alternative fuels. MEC is a frequent collaborator with Evergy and League on events. The joint effort made for a very successful educational event, with experiences for both hands-on activities and seminars full of current information related to planning for electrification, rolling it out, and the funding opportunities available for fleets. Over 400 participants came to the conference, moving back and forth between sessions and experiences.

Attendees were able to test drive (or ride depending on the manufacturer) for the duration of the event, which lasted from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Overall the Ride and Drive portion of the event was well received, and many participants were quite interested in the fully electric TRE BEV Semi from Nikola and the Fully Electric Stepvan from XOS. Attendees were able to ride in both vehicles with a supervised driver from each OEM who was able to answer any questions they had related to the vehicles and their performance.

The Ford F-150 Lightning and Volkswagen ID.4 were drivable for all attendees without supervision, and many participants were captivated by the acceleration, smoothness, and futuristic feel that came with the driving...
experience. Attendees were able to take the vehicles out on allotted 30-minute slots to get the full feeling of an EV.

A variety of vehicles allowed participants to experience the range of capabilities that comes with electrification, and ask any questions that came to mind about their functionality. Staff from MEC, Evergy, Foley, Nikola, and XOS were on hand to assist attendees in the Ride and Drive event led by Julie Dietrich of Evergy and Taylor Corn of MEC.

**Outputs and Outcomes:** The Outputs of the Ride and Drive and Energy Forum event resulted in an educational experience for over 400 fleet staff, sustainability managers, contractors, and developers who were able to dive deep into the current state of electrification in fleets. 400 people were able to increase their knowledge and understanding of the opportunities currently available in the industry.

Manufacturers who attended the event with their EVs were able to network and connect with fleets interested in electrification. Education on fleet electrification could result in reduced carbon emissions in the acquisition of electric vehicles by any of the fleets in attendance of the Energy Forum and Ride and Drive event. The Outcomes of the event resulted in starting the conversation for many fleets about the possibility of electrification within their own organizations, and event extending outside of it to their personal lives. Many people commented on the light duty vehicles and realized how they could incorporate them into their own lives. The Polestar 2 was quite the attention grabber and resulted in many conversations between event staff and attendees who had not previously been aware of all the different models available on the market. This sparked connections and relationships that were formed as a product of the conversation. A couple of people were so interested they started browsing manufacturer websites to research pricing, specifications, and other stats about the models that caught their attention. This interest could result in a purchase of an EV down the road.

**Best Practices and Lessons Learned:** The Ride and Drive itself was a successful educational experience for fleet attendees. This is new ground for a lot of people and provided them with the opportunity to learn more about what is currently available on the market for small and large EVs, how they can acquire them, and what their pros and cons are. The event itself was set up very efficiently, with time slots all filled ahead of time and attendees coming in and out like clockwork. One lesson learned is that having a reservation system in place ahead of time makes a smooth experience for both event staff and attendees. We set up a registration page beforehand so that attendees could sign up for Ride and Drive slots based on their schedule and what was available.
Empowering Leadership for an Electrified Clayton

**Major Partners:** Electrify Missouri & Ameren (St. Louis’ largest utility)

**Purpose:** To equip local leadership with the firsthand knowledge and experience needed to make informed decisions about electric mobility in the community.

**Narrative:** On a radiant October day, Electrify Missouri and the Ameren team executed a transformative mission in Clayton: equipping key stakeholders with firsthand EV experiences to complement policy discussions. In collaboration with the Executive Director of the Clayton Community Foundation, we laid the groundwork for an electrified future.

**Outputs & Outcomes**

**Ride & Drive Experience:** Offering a hands-on EV driving and charging session to the Executive Director had a profound impact. This crucial experience has enriched his proposal for a $500K community equipment grant.

**Strategic Charger Placement:** Collaborative efforts identified optimal locations for EV chargers – based on great input from Ameren – to maximize the Clayton community’s benefits.

**Educational Outreach:** Our Smart City strategist presented vital data about air quality in Clayton and neighboring areas, which is crucial for meeting specific grant prerequisites.

**Tangible Outcomes:** Collaboration strengthened Clayton’s $500K community grant application.

- Increased awareness among local leaders about the importance of sustainable transportation, measured by post-event surveys showing 95% increased enthusiasm for E.V. projects.
- Facilitated future planning sessions with the City Council on electric mobility.

The initiative resulted in a collective acknowledgment that EVs aren’t mere vehicles but levers for community growth, environmental responsibility, and economic resurgence.
Best Practices & Lesson Learned

DRIVE Electric USA leads this transformative journey by creating educational touchpoints, forging key alliances, and overcoming obstacles. We are accelerating the U.S. transition into an electrified era. Our aim? A nation not only educated but also energized and thrilled about the prospects of electric mobility.

- Connect with your utility early to plan the needed time with community leaders
- Bring in the appropriate additional people to present on their products (industry partners) or experience (other communities that have already implemented EVSE)
Priority Area #3 – Build relationships with utilities of all types and utility regulators

When – Throughout project period, and ongoing
Where – Pennsylvania, statewide

Expanding Electric Utility Connections

**Major Partners**: Duquesne Light; PECO; First Energy Companies; Rural Cooperatives, PPL

**Purpose**: To work with all electric utilities in the state, to bring vehicle electrification to the forefront of their agendas.

**Narrative**: “Drive Electric PA”, or DEPA for short, had its formative years just before the DRIVE Electric USA (DEUSA) project came to fruition. However, we used the project time to significantly ramp up parts of DEPA that needed development or improvement. Engagement with utilities was a difficult task for us. Besides our home cities (Pittsburgh and Philadelphia) whose electric utilities are Duquesne Light and PECO respectively, we have had a slow-go of adding additional utilities to help support our mission. We have met with rural cooperatives, municipal electric utilities as well as the other major electric service providers PPL and Met Ed (First Energy) UGI and West Penn Power. We met with them and asked for support for Drive Electric PA both financial and for event/workshop support within their region. We have found that early on in the project when there was lack of federal commitment to EVs, these other utilities were supportive when met with, but support lagged from them as they engaged less with DEPA. As money started flowing through PennDOT the utilities seemed to engage further (albeit most utilities did not embrace EV’s as enthusiastic as Duquesne Light and PECO did).

PennDOT’s announcement of National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program furthered the interest of the utilities around the state. We worked with PennDOT and all the local electric utilities as we jointly held traveling NEVI workshops at eight locations around the state. The utilities were engaged and offered support to help DEPA work with communities around the state that had interest in NEVI applications. Furthermore, some utility commitments came when the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation offered the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure funding opportunity. Many of the utilities were involved in supporting applications submitted throughout our state. For us this is a work in-progress in continuing to grow and strengthen our relationships with electric utilities in Pennsylvania.

✔️ Hold frequent meeting with utility partners
✔️ Identify events to collaborate on that are focused on EV education
✔️ Find opportunities to educate utility members, staff, and leadership
✔️ Collaborate with and help electric utilities acquire their own EVs

**Outputs & Outcomes**: Working directly with our utilities, we have helped host workshops for communities to learn EV basics and the necessary information for charging. We have helped review our utilities roadmap to DRIVE Vehicle Electrification.
The outcomes from working with our utility partners were numerous, from recognizing changed minds as relates to EV adoption and use to opening new doors that could produce no-tailpipe partnerships and results down the road. The utilities are always looking to partner with us on our in-person workshops to help disseminate information about EV Charging.

**Best Practices & Lessons Learned:**

a) One best practice is to get a utility member on your board of directors. Once you have developed stronger relationships, they can help you navigate to the proper contact regarding your specific needs.

b) Keep reaching out to all the utilities for your electric vehicle events, include them and bring them potential new EV customers (individual drivers, or better yet, fleets).

c) Work with different departments within the utility. Fleet, Government Affairs, Marketing all work on different aspects of vehicle electrification.

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![Map of Electric Utilities in Pennsylvania](image)

**Are the utilities willing/able to come up with any portion of the 20% local match for the utility upgrades needed?**

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<th>Yes</th>
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*Mentimeter Poll question for Utilities at NEVI meetings*
Below are several photos from events where we worked in partnership with our electric utilities during the project.
Priority Area #3 - Utility engagement

When - 2020-Present
Where - Virginia, statewide

DRIVE Electric Virginia makes great strides with electric utilities


Purpose: To further engage and garner support from electric utilities

Narrative: This past year, DRIVE Electric Virginia continued its collaborative work with investor-owned utilities, electric cooperatives and the state agencies which regulate them. This symbiotic relationship works well because the electric utilities want to serve their EV driving customers, sell more electricity and meet their sustainability goals. DRIVE Electric Virginia and Virginia Clean Cities (VCC) facilitate EVSE installation and provide resources to these customers. Additionally, several of these utilities have members serving on the VCC board so they are invested in the DRIVE Electric Virginia initiative.

✔ Identify events to collaborate with on EV education
✔ Hold frequent meeting with utility partners
✔ Find opportunities to education utility members, staff, and leadership
✔ Collaborate with and help electric utilities

Outputs & Outcomes: The narrative above discussed some outputs and outcomes, but more have been realized.

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<tr>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utility engagement</td>
<td>Collaborative events</td>
<td>VCC staff presented at utility gatherings, organized ride and drives, invited utilities to public events, hosted them for webinars, and more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utility engagement</td>
<td>Regular virtual meetings</td>
<td>VCC staff met regularly with ODEC which is an association of several electric cooperatives. Dominion Energy is a stakeholder member who works with VCC frequently on this project and others.</td>
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The DRIVE Electric Virginia team forged a new partnership with the Blue Ridge Power Agency, an association of rural municipal utilities. EV Program Manager Bruce Vlk spoke at their quarterly gathering at Peaks of Otter Lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway, which conveniently included an EV charging station.

The Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), whose membership includes several rural co-ops, included DRIVE Electric Virginia as part of their member education programming throughout the year. At their member event at the Richmond Raceway, DRIVE helped supply EV owner vehicles in addition to some of their co-op’s EVs. Participants had a blast racing around the NASCAR track in relative silence!

![Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative’s Tesla Model 3 at the Richmond Raceway.](image)

ODEC also held their EV Charging Summit with a host of speakers from industry, government and non-profit sectors. The organization is always willing to send representatives to DRIVE-related events throughout the Commonwealth.
Dominion Energy continued to be a valuable partner as they sent staff and EVs to many public outreach events held throughout the year, such as the Virginia International Auto Show in Richmond and the Virginia Clean Energy Summit. The company’s electrification division continued to be a resource for EV owners as well as school districts with their electric school bus program.

**Best Practices & Lessons Learned:**

a) We built upon already established relationships and expanded with new ones.

b) Start with the basics and be ready for skepticism among rural cooperatives.

c) Collaboration is key! Know what each party wants to get out of working together for mutual benefit.
Appalachian Power has funded some pilot electric school bus work in the Southwest Virginia region and communicates EV efforts quarterly with DRIVE Electric Virginia staff. The Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, which represents electric cooperatives in the three-state area, also communicated with the DRIVE project on a quarterly basis.

The Virginia Department of Energy serves as a guiding force for work in the transportation electrification sector, and the Virginia Department of Transportation’s Sustainability Office is overseeing the NEVI plan for Virginia. DRIVE Electric Virginia staff and electric utilities participated in the State Corporation Commission’s series of stakeholder convenings regarding electrification.

Virginia is fortunate to have so many enthusiastic electric utilities involved in building EV incentives for Virginia citizens. From education and outreach to rebate programs to electric school bus programs, Virginia’s utilities are very engaged in transportation electrification. While there are some concerns about grid capacity, the future looks bright in Virginia.
Electrifying Wisconsin through Utility Engagement

**Major Partners:** We Energies, Wisconsin Public Service, Alliant Energy, Xcel Energy, Dairyland Cooperative, WPPI Energy,

**Purpose:** To continue to develop relationships with Wisconsin utilities through education and outreach efforts related to electric vehicle and infrastructure deployment in Wisconsin.

**Narrative:**
Wisconsin utilities have played a deeply influential role in the evolution of Wisconsin Clean Cities (WCC) since its founding in 1994. We Energies, Alliant Energy, and Dairyland Cooperative have maintained active and engaged positions on the WCC Board of Directors, and We Energies has provided WCC with an office space in their Milwaukee Headquarters for over 25 years.

WCC has a history of creating opportunities for collaboration with utilities around the state. WCC hosted WI Electric Vehicle Roundtables and was the pioneering force behind the “Electric Room” in 2018 at the International Milwaukee Auto Show. Later rebranded as the “Wisconsin Clean Cities EV Zone,” sponsored by We Energies and Alliant Energy, this event was the first of its kind in the state to feature electric vehicles, infrastructure, and education sessions presented by utility partners. It was also among the first international auto shows to showcase the Tesla brand, a true crowd favorite! WCC continues to collaborate with utilities throughout the state to achieve success by hosting education showcases related to electric vehicles and infrastructure, including ride and drive opportunities.

Utilities throughout the state have been engaged in electric vehicle and infrastructure deployment. WCC is a coalition focused on fuel and technology neutrality, however electric vehicles have taken center stage as more and more consumers, governmental agencies, and business entities become interested in electrification. WCC has responded by assisting utilities to provide education and support to their customers identifying opportunities for electric vehicle deployment. WCC collaborated with Alliant Energy and the City of Madison to create the Transportation and Innovation Conference and Expo - the largest one-day transportation event in the Midwest. The inaugural event was held in the Spring of 2019, only soon to be a memory as COVID halted all in-person events. WCC persevered by offering innovative solutions to support electric deployment efforts.
virtually in 2020 and 2021. With the advent of Drive Electric Wisconsin, through Drive Electric USA, WCC was once again able to host this incredible one day event, bringing together transportation experts, businesses, communities, and consumers from across the United States in 2022 and 2023.

Due to the participation of utilities across the state, the Transportation and Innovation Conference and Expo has grown to nearly 450 attendees, more than 50 exhibitor booths, over 50 expert speakers, and more than 80 display vehicles in the indoor and outdoor displays. Most of the display vehicles feature electric technologies and models vary from electric bikes to an electric fire truck. More than 20 of the 80 vehicles are for attendee ride-and-drives and, in 2023, nearly 20% of attendees participated in this interactive segment.

**Outputs & Outcomes:**

The Wisconsin Utility landscape consists of multiple investor-owned, municipal owned, and cooperative entities. Many of these companies are members and stakeholders of WCC. The partnerships and collaboration between WCC and utilities have enabled the coalition to gain EV expertise and share this knowledge through EV education and outreach efforts throughout the state. Utility engagement has been vital to securing federal funding, taking the development of the electric vehicle and infrastructure market in the state to the next level. By partnering with utilities, WCC has unlocked additional opportunities to engage with tribal and environmental justice communities.

WCC has also acted as a resource to the utility community by hosting events, educational webinars, and vehicle ride-and-drives for utility customers. Providing these programs has positioned WCC as an industry expert and opened additional partnership opportunities with state agencies to assist in the development of programs and initiatives. Currently WCC is providing contractual services to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to assist in the strategic deployment of Wisconsin’s NEVI plan.

**Best Practices & Lessons Learned:**

A. Building relationships with utilities will be a key indicator of successful deployment projects as the electric vehicle sector continues to evolve.

B. As the coalition has seen, collaboration leads to success.

C. Relationship building takes time, perseverance, and patience; the larger the organization, the longer the decision making process.
D. Because utilities are often large with many different departments, identifying the appropriate contacts within the utilities will lead to smoother up-times as projects and opportunities continue to develop.

E. Leveraging strong, mutually-beneficial relationships with utilities and positioning the coalition as a key resource for communities and utilities alike has continued to “Drive Wisconsin Forward”. 